

AMENDMENT TO THE ABSTRACT

Please amend the abstract as follows:

[Control of a loop of a fiber-channel arbitrated-loop serial communications channel is maintained (i.e., the loop connection is held open) as long as a minimum amount of data, which optionally is determined by programming (called a "programmable amount of data"), is available for transmission, in order to reduce the overall amount of time spent arbitrating for control of the loop. The improved communications channel system includes a channel node having one or more ports, each port supporting a fiber-channel arbitrated-loop serial communications channel loop, wherein each port arbitrates for control of that port's attached channel loop. The system also includes an arbitration-and-control apparatus to reduce arbitrated-loop overhead, wherein control of the channel loop, once control is achieved by arbitration, is maintained by the arbitration-and-control apparatus as long as a predetermined amount of data is available within control of the node. In addition, a method to reduce arbitrated-loop overhead is described.]

Control of a serial communications path is maintained (i.e., the connection is held open) as long as a minimum amount of data, which optionally is determined by programming (called a "programmable amount of data"), is available for transmission, in order to reduce the overall amount of time spent opening the connection to the serial communications path. The system includes a serial device having n ports (where n equals one or more), each port supporting a serial communications path. Each port arbitrates for control of that port's attached serial communications path. The system also includes an arbitration-and-control apparatus, wherein control of the serial communications path, once control is achieved, is maintained by the arbitration-and-control apparatus as long as a predetermined amount of data is available within control of the

serial device. In addition, a method to reduce connection overhead  
is described.